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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 SANTO DOMINGO 003004

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STATE FOR WHA, WHA/CAR, WHA/OAS;  
NSC FOR SHANNON AND MADISON  
USCINCSO ALSO FOR POLAD;TREASURY FOR OASIA-LCARTER  
USDOC FOR 4322/ITA/MAC/WH/CARIBBEAN BASIN DIVISION  
USDOC FOR 3134/ITA/USFCS/RD/WH; DHS FOR CIS-CARLOS ITURREGUI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/25/2015

TAGS: PHUM PGOV DR PTER HA OAS

SUBJECT: DOMINICAN DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER COMMENTS ON  
HAITI, TERRORISM, OAS

Classified By: DCM Lisa Kubiske. Reason: 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) The DCM and econ officer called on Deputy Foreign Minister Alejandra Liriano in her office, May 23 and discussed the selection of a Deputy Secretary General at the Organization of American States

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(OAS), repatriations of Haitians, anti-terrorism conventions, racial discrimination, Dominican consulates, and recent alien smuggling cases.

OAS Assistant Secretary-General

2. (C) The Dominican Republic, though a supporter up to now of Ramdin of Surinam, is not firmly wedded to that position and DCM encouraged the MFA to consider Leal. Liriano did not reject that possibility though it appears the country is talking with several other countries.

Details: The Dominican Republic has long been thinking of supporting Ramdin, for reasons of strategic relations with CARICOM, who favor him. However, some of the countries the Dominicans are friendly with have pointed out that Ramdin doesn't speak Spanish, and so there is some "reconsideration" going on. Other Latin American countries are concerned that in the event of a crisis a non-Spanish speaker would have difficulty in communicating the OAS message. DCM told Liriano that the USG is not likely to announce our position until near the end, but that we are thinking of supporting Leal. Leal, DCM noted, was a Central American, and both the United States and the Dominican Republic had hoped for a Central American candidate for Sec-Gen originally. Liriano agreed that could be a consideration. Liriano agreed that Leal had great experience and reputation, and that he got along well with others. On the other hand, she worried that putting a former foreign minister in the Asst Sec-Gen job would set a precedent that OAS members might not always want in the future (bar too high).

Repatriating Haitians

3. (C) Bottom line: The Deputy Foreign Minister was already sensitized about the human rights issue and has now heard our most recent explicit expression of concern. The problem is complex and the MFA is not the only driver (or even the main driver) of this issue. We hope that the Dominicans will now factor in our concerns also and start to make some changes in procedures of handling illegal Haitians.

DCM expressed concern over the repatriation of illegal Haitians in the form in which it had been done. The Dominican Republic was opening itself to charges (however inaccurate) of ònic cleansing and raising the specter (true or not) of the Central European-style mass deportations of the 1930s. There are international norms. How the country repatriates illegals matters, and the Dominican government needs to think about its reputation. Liriano agreed that the way it was done - picking people up off the streets - inevitably led to abuses that should not occur and exposed abuses not consistent with the country's own principles and commitments on human rights and anti-racism.

The issue was complex, she said. It included fraud and crime by Haitian-Dominican rings who sent Haitian women across the border to beg and other things. The people being repatriated sometimes didn't have documents on either side of the border. And, the Dominican-Haitian border is extremely porous; the country needs both technology and manpower, and the resources for these, to tighten it up. (DCM mentioned the border assessment team that the USG/Southcom is sending in July, and Liriano expressed appreciation and thanks.) At present, she continued, the Dominican Republic does not even have a way to ensure that the Haitians who come for market day in Dajabon return to Haiti at the end of the day. She said "if we

deport 3000 Haitians, another 3000 show up the next day.". And, there is not a well-functioning government in Haiti (the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere) with which to sign a bilateral agreement.

Liriano said that Fernandez and team had tried to make some improvements in the first Fernandez administration. Perhaps Haitian temporary workers could be given identity cards and there were at least some other options available.

Liriano, in reply to DCM,s question, said that the Migration Office has been working on drafting the implementing regulations to the Migration Law - regulations that would implement the country's international commitments and those of the revised law. She emphasized that even with more laws the solution to the problem depends on adequate resources, technology and the ability to pay border agents a sufficient income to discourage corruption.

Finally, when Fernandez said to the press that the repatriations would be continuing, he was re-affirming a sovereign right to repatriate individuals who had entered illegally and to send a message to Haitians that the border was not wide open, she said. DCM commented that mass round-ups seemed a poor way to handle this.

Postscript: The decision to repatriate, she said, was made by the Directorate of Migration. Since the time of this conversation, many repatriated Haitians have returned to the Dominican Republic, our sources tell us.

#### Terrorism

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14. (SBU) DCM brought along a chart that had appeared in the Department's unclassified annual terrorism report showing the 12 UN conventions against terrorism, as well as the signing and ratifying countries. The Dominican Republic is behind in signing and ratifying these, DCM said, and the USG is interested in seeing it catch up to the rest of the world. Liriano was interested and promised to investigate the status of efforts on each one.

#### Racial Discrimination

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15. (SBU) DCM gave a heads up that Embassy officers (and most recently, a Peace Corps volunteer) had experienced a number of incidents of racial discrimination and that DCM would be discussing with the Ambassador how to handle this. Liriano said to let her know which private clubs weren't admitting our African-American officers and what else was happening and that the government might be able to help, since discrimination was against the country's policies. She said cases involving discrimination were important to the Dominican Republic because of their role in the United Nations with anti-discrimination efforts. Embassy will follow up with Liriano.

#### Dominican Consulates

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16. (SBU) DCM noted the Dominican government's application for an official Dominican consulate in Philadelphia. Liriano asked if there was any word from the State Department on that or the question of regularizing Dominican diplomatic and consular personnel.

#### Alien Smugglers

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17. (C) Next topic wasx the activity of Russian and Ukrainian alien smugglers in the Dominican Republic, and the successful arrest and deportation of two of them last week -- via Miami, where they were arrested. Might the Dominican Republic want to consider requiring visas for these nationalities? Liriano thought the visa requirement already existed. Liriano noted that the government (Ministry of Tourism) has launched a campaign to attract Russian and Ukrainian tourists to the country and as a result had eased restrictions on their travel. Russians and Ukrainians can obtain visas once they are in the Dominican Republic. Note: DCM and Emboffs will meet June 3 with the Under Secretary for Consular Affairs to further discuss this topic.

18. (U) This report and other extensive material is available on our SIPRNET site at <http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/wha/santodomingo> .1. KUBISKE